EDUCATIONAL CONCESSIONS TO CONVERTS FROM DEPRESSED CLASSES

48. Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* Will Government be pleased to state.—

(*a*) whether they are aware of the following press communique issued by the Madras Government on 21st August 1941—

"Under the rules converts to Christianity from the Scheduled Classes are eligible for fee concessions in educational institutions only if they satisfy the following conditions :

(1) that they themselves or their parents on both the paternal and maternal sides were members of the scheduled classes, and

(2) that they belong to families that continue to live under conditions similar to those of the scheduled class concerned.

Representations have been made to Government that these conditions cause great hardship and should be cancelled.

The Government have carefully considered the matter and have come to the conclusion that there is not sufficient justification for making a distinction between the Scheduled Classes and converts from these classes to Christianity or any other religion for purposes of fee concessions, since it is generally reported that converts from scheduled classes are socially in the same position as that in which they were before conversion. They have therefore sanctioned the grant to converts and their descendants, with effect from the current year, of all fee concessions for which the Scheduled Classes are eligible under the existing rules and orders' ; and

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(*b*) whether Government will be pleased to modify the recent Government orders disentitling converts from Depressed Classes from educational concessions on the lines of the Communique quoted above ?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):*

(*a*) Yes.

(*b*) No.

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* May I know, Sir, what was the rule prevailing before the present order was passed by the Government regarding concessions to converts from Depressed Classes?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* I have not got a copy of the rules.

Rao Sahib I. N. Menon *(Director of Public Instruction):* As far as I remember, no reference whatsoever was made to religion.

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* May I know, Sir, whether the Government have any objection to strike a *via media* course on the lines of Nos. 1 and 2, namely, the orders passed by the Madras Government before the present order of fulfilling certain conditions?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* I shall be guided by the Council in this matter.

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* May I know, Sir, whether before passing the present order, the Minister has consulted this House with regard to this matter?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* Yes. The committee appointed by this Council, the committe elected by this Council advised the Minister, and he carried out the advice.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi):* Is not the power of the committee very limited?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* That depends upon the way you treat the committee. That depends upon the mentality of the persons.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi):* Has the Hon'ble Minister read the speech of Sir Shanmukham Chetty constituting the Advisory Committees?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* What I said is, with regard to the power enjoyed by a committee, to a very great extent, it depends upon the way the committee is treated.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi):* Only practical details the committee will discuss, but no policy will be framed by the committee.

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Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* That is why I said that I will be guided by the decision of the Council. The Council may bring forward a resolution and advise the Government to make the necessary changes and I shall be very happy to accept that resolution.

Mr. C. R. Iyyunni *(Trichur-South):* May I know what exactly is the scope of reference to that Committee?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* The Committee says that only *bona fide* Depressed Classes should be given these concessions.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi):* Has the Committee power to make such a recommendation? The action of the Committee is *ultra vires.*

മിസ്റ്റർ വി. കെ. കുട്ടി: ആ റിപ്പോർട്ടിനെപ്പറ്റി ഒരു അടിയന്തിരപ്രമേയം ഈ കൌൺസിലിൽ ഉണ്ടായിട്ടില്ലെ ?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* Yes.

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* May I know, Sir, whether a recommendation was made by the Advisory Committee or by a Special Committee constituted by the Advisory Committee?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* A Sub-committee constituted by the Advisory Committee recommended to the Committee and the Committee by a majority recommended it to the Minister.

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* May I know whether the Advisory Committee has not got nominated members on it?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* There is one nominated member on the Committee. All the others are elected by this Council. In fact, all of them are members of this Council.

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* May I know, Sir, whether the Government is accepting all the recommendations of the Advisory Committees?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* As far as possible, I am doing that, or I will convince the Committee of the difficulty in carrying it out.

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* May I know whether, in exercising the discretion to decide on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Minister is not taking a personal responsibility?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* Yes, I take personal responsibility and where I see I agree with their views, there is nothing to stand in the way of carrying them out.

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മിസ്റ്റർ വി. കെ. കുട്ടി: അഡ്ജൺമെൻറ് മോഷൻ കൊണ്ടുവന്നപ്പോൾ ഈ കൌൺസിലിൽ അതിനെപ്പറ്റി ഡിസ്കഷനുണ്ടായില്ലെ?

ഡോക്ടർ എ. ആർ മേനോൻ: ഉണ്ടായി.

മിസ്റ്റർ വി. കെ. കുട്ടി: അതിനെ സംബന്ധിച്ചുണ്ടായ വാദപ്രതിവാദത്തിന്റെ ഫലമെന്തായിരുന്നു? അതു തള്ളിപ്പോകയല്ലെ ചെയ്തതു"?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* Yes.

Mr. V. J. Mathai *(Planters):* Does conversion by itself improve the financial conditions of the people?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* No.

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* May I know whether Government have received any deputation or memorial protesting against the order of Government?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* From whom?

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* From anybody.

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* When?

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* At any time.

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* Oh, yes.

Mr. Kochukunhan Kaimal *(Vadakkancheri):* May I know whether there was any deputation from the persons affected by this order?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* Yes, there were petitions for and against. It is common here to receive petitions for and against everything. Somebody will get up a petition for a thing, then some against it and sometimes the same people sign the petitions for and against *(Laughter)*.

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* May I know, Sir, whether the Hon'ble Minister has come to the conclusion that there is any change in the financial position of the converts?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* Let me explain the matter. I will record my vote for a resolution if one is moved that poor people also must be given concession, but so far as this definition of "Depressed Classes" is concerned, I am bound to abide by the recommendation and the interpretation given to it by the committee.

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* Is there any difference between the definition of "Depressed Classes" given by our Government and the Madras Government?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* I do not know.

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Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* Has the Hon'ble Minister examined the question and compared the definitions of both the Governments before the order was issued?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* It is not necessary for me to follow what the Madras Government is doing or what the Bengal Government is doing. I am not prepared to do everything that the Madras Government is doing. I am sure the House will not be happy if I carry out all their actions.

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* I perfectly understand it well. The question is whether in interpreting the definition of "Depressed Classes" the Minister has examined the definition in Madras.

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* It has not been part of my work to go on interpreting the rules laid down by the Madras Government.

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* May I know, Sir, whether the Government has examined the definition given to "Depressed Classes" in any native State?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minisier for Rural Development):* Different States have adopted different methods. Certain States have adopted measures which are more rigorous than the measures adopted here.

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* I am not on the measures. I am on the definition given to Depressed Classes. I am concentrating my question with regard to the definition and construction which you have given to it. That is why I ask whether you have examined the definition given to Depressed Classes in other States also.

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* The Madras Government changed the interpretation.

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* Does the Hon'ble Minister think that he is absolutely controlled by the definition or its construction in this matter? The Hon'ble Minister was stating that the definition as such compels him to take up such a stand, irrespective of other considerations. I put it to you, are you right in saying that several governments have given different constructions to that definition, and that you are bound by that definition put upon by the Advisory Committee and the literal meaning of that alone.

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* Why not? Why should I be bound by the Madras definition?

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* You have not examined it. Have you examined it so that the House may understand whether you are exercising your discretion with a full meaning of responsibility in this matter?

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Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* I do not want to stand before this House and give an explanation before this House that I have exercised my authority with due responsibility. I hope the House will think that I am exercising my functions with due responsibility without giving any assurance here.

Mr. C. R. Iyyunni *(Trichur-South):* May I know, Sir, the practice that was obtaining before the Minister was appointed? Was not the rule changed by him?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* Yes, Sir.

Mr. C. R. Iyyunni *(Trichur-South):* At that time was any reference made to religion at all?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* I was not responsible for it.

Mr. C. R. Iyyunni *(Trichur-South):* If no reference was made to religion in the previous practice, why was that thing introduced when you became the Minister?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* I have explained the reason. The committee elected by this very House made certain recommendations to the Minister and those recommendations were accepted. The only body who can override that interpretaion is this House. Why not bring in a resolution and get a majority vote?

Mr. M. K. Devassy *(Adur):* Sir, I think we should explain our position. This is a matter which affects the interests of the minority communities and it will not be possible in any Council for the minority communities, especially to get the right by a majority vote. That is why we want the Government to exercise their discretion carefully in this matter so that the interests of the minorities are protected. We can understand why the Hon'ble Minister is pressing upon the question. But Government must also understand why we are sticking on to this question.

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* This is the first time that an hon'ble member in this House states that any minority interests have been sacrificed by the majority. I challenge this House to show any single instance where the majority has sacrificed the interests of the minorities. I invite you, Sir, to give me one or two instances.

Mr. M. L. Joseph *(Latin Christians-Cranganur):* Child Marriage Restraint Bill.

Mr. A. B. Salem *(Mattancheri):* May I know whether, after the conversion, a Depressed Class man still remains a Depressed Class man?

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Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* No, he does not.

മിസ്റ്റർ വി. കെ. കുട്ടി: പബ്ലിക്ക് ഫണ്ടിൽനിന്നും മദ്രാസ് ഗവമ്മെണ്ടു അവിടത്തെ ബിഷപ്പന്മാക്കു ശമ്പളം കൊടുത്തുവരുന്നതായി ഗവമ്മെണ്ടിന്നറിയാമൊ?

ഡോക്ടർ എ. ആർ. മേനോൻ: കേട്ടിട്ടുണ്ടു.

മിസ്റ്റർ വി. കെ. കുട്ടി: അതുപോലെ ഇവിടെ ചെയ്യാവൊന്നൊ? ഇല്ലെങ്കിൽ അതിന്നുള്ള വിരോധമെന്താണു?

ഡോക്ടർ എ. ആർ. മേനോൻ: വിരോധമുണ്ടു.

മിസ്റ്റർ വി. കെ. കുട്ടി: എന്തുകൊണ്ടാണു് ആ വിരോധമുള്ളതു്?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* I don't think it necessary to pay the heads of religion here.

Mr. C. R. Iyyunni *(Trichur-South):* Does it mean that a mental change effects a change in the economic condition?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* No. It is not based upon the economic consideration alone. There are poor people in various communities. And as I said, if all the poor people are to be given concessions, and if such a resolution is brought forward, I will be the first person to accept it.

Mr. C. R. Iyyunni *(Trichur-South):* That is not the point. In the interpretation that is given to the Depressed Classess, the idea of religion did not exist before. Now, after you came into the position of the Minister, it is you who imported it.

Mr. C. V. Iyyu *(Kunnamkulam):* The Hon'ble Minister said on the floor of the House that all the members of the Advisory Committee are elected.

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* I did not say that.

Mr. C. V. Iyyu *(Kunnamkulam):* All the members of the Advisory Committee are not elected by this House. There is a nominated member on the Committee. Further, Mr. V. K. Kutty and Mr. P. K. Krishnan who have taken the majority view are both nominated members to this House.

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* They were elected to the committee by this House. You alone misunderstand things.

Mr. C. V. Iyyu *(Kunnamkulam):* I don't misunderstand.

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